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## The Secret Notebook

by Richard Rewell

I sat in my halls of residence room at university in anticipation of the arrival of my friends. I had sprinkled some lavender upon the oak floorboards, lit the candles that sprayed a warm glow around my room and commenced enjoying the heat coming from the purring fire. I opened the crate of claret. All was set.

*Quickly I thought, an entry into my secret notebook.*

At my desk I dipped the quill's nib into the ink and hunched over my notebook scratching, 'Everyone is very much alike, really. But fortunately, they don't realise it.'

*Why did I write that? I pondered. Because I had observed that my new friends were alike. But very different from anyone I had met before. Each one of them was forceful, ambitious and seemingly in a state of constant propulsion, pushed by an invisible force, inducing them to run through life as if it were a race. Yet each one of them was oblivious to their similarities.*

"Thank God" I said thinking, *what if they realised they were so much alike would they not like each other anymore? I'd write about that later.* I could hear them outside my door and speedily shut my notebook. I did not want them to know about my secret notebook.

Nell entered first. She did not walk. She glided. Statuesque and beautiful. She was studying Hospitality Management and for an enchanting ten seconds me too. "Where's your secret notebook?" she said with a seductive grin. "Am I in it?"

My face shone crimson as I said, "What notebook?"

Issac tumbled in, his powdered wig slanted at an angle defying gravity and a testimony to the disregard for his own appearance.

He studied Physics and was gorging on an apple. Eddie followed carrying a large jar of ale. No wig but groomed hair and an explosive giant black beard defined the Maritime Studies undergraduate. As did the toy cutlass hanging from his belt.

“Your secret notebook? I hope I’m in it?” said Eddie.

My face shone crimson again as I said, “What notebook?”

“Well, it’s what a gentleman does when he’s on a creative writing degree Eddie mate,” said my final guest Chris, his West country burr an interesting contrast to Eddie’s sing-song Cockney. “And by the way. Am I in it?” said the architecture student.

“A notebook? Am I in it too?” said Issac.

“For God’s sake. OK. I might have one, alright? Now claret or beer?” I said.

Their carriage arrived five hours later, and I got a heavenly kiss on the lips from Nell, a prod from Eddie’s toy cutlas and an apple core from Issac. We were intoxicated.

Chris swayed before me and whispered, “Forget your notebook, Sammy. Write and publish a diary. They’re the future mate. Write about your four friends. We’re going to be famous. Me, Christopher Wren. Nell Gwyn and Issac Newton. Not sure about Eddie Teach, but his terrifying black beard might help his profile somehow. Even you, maybe. Night, Pepysy.”

My bedroom clock chimed quarter past something, and I crawled into the fourposter, regretting Nell was not in attendance, blew out the candle and thought. *I’ll give it a go. I’ll buy a diary tomorrow.*